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New York

President:	Mr. Frlec	(Slovenia)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Petrella
	Bahrain	Mr. Buallay
	Brazil	Mr. Fonseca
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Dangue-Réwaka
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Holbrooke

Agenda

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Briefing by the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

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The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m.

Expression of sympathy in connection with the recent plane crash in Kosovo

The President: At the outset of the meeting, I should like, on behalf of the Council, to express sincere condolences to the bereaved families of the personnel of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, United Nations agencies and other humanitarian aid organizations, government representatives and crew members who lost their lives in the crash of the plane of the World Food Programme on Friday, 12 November 1999, in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We will remember them as men and women who risked and lost their lives while following humanitarian imperatives in the cause of peace.

I now invite the members of the Council to stand and observe a minute of silence.

The members of the Council observed a minute of silence.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Briefing by the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I request the Chief of Protocol to escort His Excellency Mr. Ante Jelavic, Chair of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, His Excellency Mr. Alija Izetbegovic, Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and His Excellency Mr. Zivko Radisic, Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to seats at the Council Table.

Mr. Ante Jelavic, Chair of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Alija Izetbegovic, Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Mr. Zivko Radisic, Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina were escorted to seats at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Ante Jelavic, Chair of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Alija Izetbegovic, Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Mr. Zivko Radisic, Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to whom, on behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome.

I should like to recall that members of the Council may put questions to the Members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina after their briefings.

The first speaker is Mr. Ante Jelavic, Chair of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, whom I now invite to make his statement.

Mr. Jelavic (Bosnia and Herzegovina) (*spoke in Croatian; interpretation provided by the delegation*): It is my pleasure and an honour to address this noble body, in particular at a time when we mark the fourth anniversary of the Dayton/Paris Agreement. We are grateful for the invitation to speak before the Council and extend warm greetings to you, Sir, who as Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia travelled to New York especially to preside over this meeting. We would also like to extend greetings to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan. We offer our sympathies to him and to the many families around the world who recently lost their loved ones in Kosovo.

I believe this discussion will be fruitful. After all, we did not come here solely to mark an anniversary, but also to advance the implementation of the Agreement. This is evidenced by the New York Declaration, which was adopted by the Presidency last night and which has been distributed to the Council members. I would like to note that we reached an agreement on establishing the State border service. Further, in the context of strengthening inter-entity cooperation, we agreed to form joint units that would take part in the future United Nations peacekeeping operations. In this way we would like to show that we can play a constructive role in international affairs and, to some degree, repay a debt to international community and to all of those who in the uniforms of the United Nations Protection Force, the Implementation Force and the Stabilization Force have contributed to establishing peace in our country.

The Declaration also addresses the question of return of refugees, first of all, to the urban centres. We will provide information about this process every three months. With the goal of strengthening the common institutions, the Declaration foresees the formation of a Presidency secretariat, as well as the improvement of consistency in the work of all State ministries, especially in the context of their timely functioning. We also gave support to activities in the fight against corruption and in promoting transparency, as well as establishing a central database for passports. Common travel documents are also envisioned.

We expect today's debate to proceed within the framework of the recent statements to the Council by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Klein, and the High Representative, Mr. Petritsch. Their reports have, among other things, noted the publication over the past year of a number of independent studies that began to question the successes, as well as the very future, of the 1995 Agreement.

We believe it is appropriate to debate frankly the criticisms that have been directed at the Agreement, as well as at those directed at us. Nevertheless, it is inappropriate to dramatize the situation, failing to take into account the starting point — from which, it could be said, we have only recently commenced. We are all aware of the despair that we are moving away from, and in this context we see notable improvement. There is real progress in the stabilization of peace, the freedom of movement, the rebuilding of infrastructure — hospitals, schools, houses, bridges, roads — the fully functioning common currency, common documents, passports, licence plates and symbols. The return of refugees and displaced persons should be noted in particular. All of this was accomplished due to the unselfish support and the notable assistance of the international community.

Furthermore, I would like to underscore the situation of real peace that reigns in the spirits of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina — a lasting and self-sustaining peace. I am convinced that the events of our recent past are simply not repeatable, as Dayton gives us a moral responsibility, military equilibrium and a political framework that ensures the stability and prospects of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The visible and important progress notwithstanding, there are many more tasks ahead of us, of which one of the most important is the issue of the functioning of the joint institutions, and especially the reorganization of the Council of Ministers in accordance with the decision by the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is important to accomplish this while maintaining the principle of consensus in the decision-making of the Council. The Council of Ministers should also take on a greater share of responsibilities in the resolution of ongoing issues of vital importance for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The issue of implementing serious economic and social reforms is also an enormous task and one of the most important priorities. We are aware that failure on the economic front could call into question the entire process. Respect for human rights and, especially in our case, the right to ownership are also top priorities. In this light, the implementation of the property laws promulgated by the High Representative is of crucial importance in promoting the process of the return of refugees and displaced persons. Consistent and effective work by the International Tribunal at The Hague and, especially, the apprehension of the most-wanted individuals are also crucial.

Fighting terrorism, organized crime and corruption is another of the most important tasks that we are confronted with. Hence, it is important to implement the reform of the legal system and the police, to harmonize the laws on the whole territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to pass a consistent law on the border services of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Of all the priorities, I emphasize the issue of the return of refugees and displaced persons. A large number of refugees have returned to the country, mostly from Europe. The same cannot be said for so-called minority returns, which have amounted to only 80,000 individuals. Nevertheless, I think that I, at least, can speak of a success here; more than half of these returnees have returned to the majority areas of the people that I primarily represent in the Presidency. More than 50 per cent of the pre-war minority residents have returned to the Croat majority areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is more than anywhere else in Bosnia and Herzegovina, more than in Croatia, more than in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and more than in Kosovo. In fact, this is more than is typical historically after such conflicts.

For example, about 40 per cent of pre-war non-Croats in the western municipalities of Mostar have never left or reside there again. It is difficult to find such a percentage in others of the larger cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I believe these elements should be noted. Allow me to repeat, about 40 percent of pre-war non-

Croats in the western municipalities of Mostar never left or reside there again.

The issue of the return of minorities should not be overlooked now that a significant number of refugees have returned. Instead, the focus should be directed to the areas where the return has been minimal.

We in Bosnia and Herzegovina are aware that problems exist. In June, at the outset of my eight-month mandate as Chair of the Presidency, we outlined the crisis issues that must be resolved. These are issues related to the economic regeneration of the country. We are aware that without creating a climate suitable for economic growth and foreign investment, there will be little progress in the implementation of the Peace Accords, that failure on the economic front calls into question the stability of the State.

Economic reform must be directed at such issues as privatization, the rule of law, overcoming corruption and the social and retirement systems — in other words, at the creation of institutions that form the foundation of a market economy. We must focus our attention on creating a unified market in Bosnia and Herzegovina that will be open to our neighbours and other States of the region. The joint European Union/Bosnia and Herzegovina Consultative Task Force has been assisting us on these issues for over a year. The Stability Pact, which seeks to establish a new value system for the States of the region in the areas of governance, economic management and security is now available as well.

Speaking specifically, I must stress that we have two important laws before us in Bosnia and Herzegovina: the permanent election law and the law on the border service. The Presidency has discussed these important laws on a number occasions. I believe that these two laws should be linked to the policy proposed by the High Representative of transferring the ownership of the process to us. These laws are of key importance to the vitality of the country, perhaps not so much for their own sake as for the type of country that we are building.

For the success of the peace agreement and the future of the country, the question of who builds the State — we or the international community — is of paramount importance. Such important elements as these laws must be adopted only by the appropriate state institutions. I therefore call upon the international community to accept the principle of our responsibility for ourselves as the cornerstone of building Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in this context to allow sufficient time for debate in the process of passing these laws, as opposed to insisting on overambitious deadlines and on imposing solutions.

Haste and the frequent imposition of solutions strengthen the culture of dependency and promote exclusivity and extremism. If it is clear that the High Representative intends to impose a solution on his own, then it is in the interests of the parties to promote and represent maximalist positions. In such a situation, the belief in a common or collective interest is marginalized.

I feel that the best solutions for our country are those that are acceptable to all three of its constituent parts and that respect the dignity of each citizen. It is also important that everything we propose be understandable and acceptable to each individual, on whose behalf we are here to solve complex issues. At the same time, the solutions must be practical. Ideal solutions can be drawn up on paper, but that does not mean that they are always implementable.

At the Madrid Conference of the Peace Implementation Council, I welcomed the establishment of the border service as a state institution. I said that the creation of this service should be linked to the contraction of some other institutions that are now less important, such as the military. I still ask for the Council's support on this matter.

We are reviewing the election law carefully. Our re-elections are focused on principles, such as the equality of citizens and peoples and the standardization of these rights. We are of the opinion that the dual goals of respecting the principle of constituent peoples and of building a civil society are well suited to the Serb community and should be duplicated for the other two. In Republika Srpska, the number of so-called crossover voters is clearly defined and a distinct level of multi-ethnicity is built into the electoral registers.

In the Federation, meanwhile, due to the numerical majority of one community, the possibility of crossover votes is unintentionally promoted for one community alone: the smaller one. Conversely, the candidates from the larger community are the only ones to be elected exclusively along ethnic lines.

The issue of the election law is the most sensitive question for the numerically smallest constituent component of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The law must secure the election of legitimate representatives of all peoples into the common state institutions, in particular

the Presidency and the House of Peoples. We will soon present proposals in this regard.

Multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism are not contentious issues for the Croat component of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The best way to ensure these elements of the State is through equal access to institutions for all three components, consensus in decision-taking in respect of vital national interests, and decentralized authority along the lines of the European principle of subsidiarity.

Since the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia at the Hague is being considered by the General Assembly and the Security Council, I should like to focus particular attention on this question. We consider the Tribunal to be an essential element on the path to reconciliation in our country. I believe that it can still succeed in this respect. However, this common goal will be achievable only if the indictments before the Tribunal conform to the real scope and breadth of the crimes that were perpetrated. Among other things, this involves the problem of the so-called "big fish" who remain out of the reach of justice even to this day. The proportion of the parties indicted to those imprisoned is also problematic.

I emphasize the fact that not a single indictment has been brought against perpetrators of crimes in which Bosnia and Herzegovina Croats were the primary victims, which we find extremely worrisome. In this context, I draw attention to the so-called "Uzdol four" indictment, which has been set aside at the Hague for years now. At this time, we do not support turning over cases to local courts in Bosnia and Herzegovina because the present system does not possess the capacity for this task. The former High Representative, Mr. Westendorp, has spoken quite clearly about the situation in our courts.

The work of the Tribunal should also be advanced in regard to the rights of the accused. The defence must have the same resources and access to international documentation of the war as the prosecution. The selective use of international evidence will not lead to justice.

To conclude, I am optimistic about Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Dayton/Paris framework. The Accords should be harmonized with new situations and needs and should be advanced. This is only to be expected, since the solutions imposed immediately after the war represent imbalances that were created by the war. Long-term stability, however, demands a balance removed from war — a balance of rights for the three constituent peoples.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, we must strive towards the goals of balancing and harmonizing the interests of the three constituent peoples, on the one hand, and of building a civil society on the other. Collective national rights and the rights of individuals, distinct from the issue of nationality, should supplement and not conflict with each other. The exclusivity of one or the other does not represent a just or viable solution. The structure of the Peace Agreement should be balanced in favour of consistency and the standardization of the rights of all peoples and all citizens, which it is not at present. All three peoples must have the same modalities to access institutions of authority and each citizen must enjoy the same rights throughout the State. Inequality leads to dissatisfaction or instability.

Our young State is like all new institutions. It grows, changes and gains in strength. This State is ours and we must govern it responsibly, now also in partnership with the Security Council and its irreplaceable assistance. This State can advance, however, only if it is built in accordance with our capabilities, views and agreements.

In this context, we urge the Council to insist on direct communication between us in all institutions, as we in the Presidency have recently started to practice, as opposed to the former practice of communication through the Council. If this message is clear and we all exercise patience, I am convinced that, together, we will be able to achieve the self-sustaining, multicultural and multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina that we seek.

The President: I thank the Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina for his kind words addressed to me.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alija Izetbegovic, Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Izetbegovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina): At the outset, I would like to say how pleased I am to see the delegation of Slovenia, and in particular you, Mr. President, presiding over the Security Council. I would also like to express my appreciation to the members of the Security Council for giving us the opportunity to speak about Bosnia and Herzegovina here today.

I also take this opportunity to express my sympathy to the families and friends of all those who recently died in the cause of peace in the plane crash in Kosovo.

Unlike in the recent past, today I appear before the Security Council as just one of the members of a new rotating Presidency adopted as part of the Dayton/Paris Peace Accords. There may thus be an impression that I would not be so pleased with the new circumstances. That is not the case.

Thanks to the Dayton/Paris Accords, we do have peace and we do have a joint Presidency, in which at least the opportunity exists for all to work together and chart one course for the good of one country and its people. Compared to war and fighting alone — the forces of ethnic racism and cleansing — my current role and, most critically, the situation of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina are preferable.

In the past four years, thanks to the efforts of our people and the assistance of the international community, we have repaired almost every school, hospital and bridge. We have restored the postal service and electricity supply systems which were severely damaged. Today we have more students than we had before the war, and our post offices and our hospitals are better equipped. Our monetary currency is stable. We have facilitated the return of almost half of the refugees and displaced persons to their homes.

While giving priority to infrastructure, we have not achieved satisfactory results in the reconstruction of the economy, which still has to undergo a serious transformation. Here I am primarily referring to the privatization of small, medium and large companies, as well as the adoption of laws to create conditions conducive for foreign investors. This task is before us, and it is of crucial importance for the strengthening of peace and stability in our country.

So, to some, the glass may appear to be half empty. To me, and I believe to most Bosnians, the glass is half full. We now must find the means to make the glass more full, even if drop by drop. We and the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina really have no alternative, even if the rate of progress is slow.

Allow me now to briefly address the list of issues and areas where the Security Council and the international community as a whole can assist.

First, the rate of refugee return is still too slow and obstructed in many aspects. We must accelerate the process. Unless people return to their homes soon, the peace will appear hollow and the return to normalcy will be indefinitely stalled. Bosnia and Herzegovina has always been a multi-ethnic country, where people of different ethnic backgrounds have been intermingled in all its regions. However, some still insist upon the idea that the two entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina are ethnically homogeneous. That must be changed. Bosnia and Herzegovina and both of its entities must embrace the three constituent peoples and others in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This was already demanded by the Peace Accords. We have agreed to provide the Security Council in three months with a progress report regarding refugee return during this period, and expect that the Council will see real results, or address the obstruction.

Secondly, those responsible for war crimes must be arrested and prosecuted. The situation has improved, with the stabilization force (SFOR) taking a more active role. However, as the most recent report of the President of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia indicates, much needs to be done, especially in terms of certain areas of the region. I trust that the Security Council will heed the concerns and the request for action outlined by the Tribunal in this report. Without such action, the atmosphere in the region will remain dominated by the stale smell of "ethnic cleansing".

Thirdly, the pace of rebuilding our country and economic reform must be quickened. Here we must recognize our responsibility and endeavour to move more rapidly. Still, we need real assistance to rebuild from the base of a war-damaged landscape and an outdated economic system. We also need the input of the Office of the High Representative to harmonize the economic system throughout the country.

Fourthly, this brings me to the widely discussed issue of corruption. We must heighten our vigilance, and we also must make sure that we have the tools for the job. The most powerful means, of course, is the effective control of Bosnia and Herzegovina's borders. Corruption within our country is not linked to misuse of aid money. Such moneys are almost exclusively managed through non-governmental organizations and directly by the donor countries. Rather, the trouble is the lack of effective control of Bosnia and Herzegovina's borders. It produces smuggling and lost customs and tax revenues. It also is a major risk in terms of international crime and terrorism. The Council has certainly heard what kind of

difficulties we faced in regard to the adoption of the Law on State Border Service. As long as some resist effective control of our borders by a diverse Bosnian border service, Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue to be at risk. Not to support the Law on State Border Service really means to support corruption. Here I have to pause and inform the Council that only yesterday evening we adopted the New York Declaration, which contains the framework for the border service law. I must state that I fully support the Declaration.

Fifthly, I come to the most complex and serious issue. The Dayton Agreement endowed Bosnia and Herzegovina with an opportunity to end a war, but not with all the necessary means to effectively manage its affairs. Particularly at the central government level, we lack common mechanisms to have a functioning and unified Bosnia and Herzegovina. Even with existing institutions, the constant demand for consensus decision-making on all issues too frequently stalls the whole political system. Consensus decision-making is too frequently misused to obstruct. Always seeking the lowest common denominator in decisions can be translated into anarchy or dependency, or both.

I should also like to emphasize the continuing mine problem. However, the process of demining has at least some momentum, and, with the assistance of Slovenian colleagues and others, we have confidence in the gradual elimination of the plague.

Finally, I turn to the issue of security in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region as a whole. We have decided to unilaterally reduce our military expenditure by 15 per cent in 1999. We are ready for a further reduction, on condition that it be done throughout the region, in accordance with the Vienna Protocol. We believe that a most appropriate contribution to global peace would be to offer our soldiers and police to the United Nations peacekeeping efforts. Bosnia and Herzegovina has a moral responsibility to help others in need. Our recent experience can be used as a valuable lesson for others in need of peacekeeping. As important, this could serve to give formerly opposing militaries in our country a unified perspective of the future.

As for the region, we cannot feel secure in our future until the region as a whole moves forward economically and towards the necessary respect for democratic, human and minority rights.

Ownership is a term that has recently become more popular in reference to Bosnia and Herzegovina. It may be a new, stylish terminology, but it is an established concept. Indeed, it may be most appropriate now that we remind ourselves and the Council that Bosnia and Herzegovina is ours, that it is for the Bosnians.

I must enthusiastically endorse the ownership concept now being espoused. Bosnia and Herzegovina always has been and will be for its peoples. We take responsibility for the Dayton Accords. The Accords were negotiated with the direct input of the Contact Group countries — the United States of America, France, the United Kingdom, the Russian Federation, Germany and Italy — and was endorsed by this entire Council. I have in the past stated that the Dayton Accords were a compromise not only between different parties, but also between justice and injustice, between democratic and undemocratic ideas.

Nonetheless, I fully stand behind my signature to the Peace Agreement and the commitments under it. This is the best that could be achieved under the circumstances. I also trust that the Council will stand by this Agreement, not just as a historical document, but as a breathing, evolving charter for peace. We expect that the Council and the other endorsers and signatories will promote the evolution of a Dayton Agreement consistent with the highest standards of democracy, economic development and respect for human rights.

In this Council, and under similar circumstances, the leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina, its institutions and people are collectively assessed blame for the too frequent failures of the process. The placement of collective accountability on all shields the individuals responsible. Accountability for progress, or lack of progress, in the political process and decisions must be borne by individuals.

We did not request the world's assistance because we did not know how to manage our country; rather, we were faced with the brutal reality of making a flawed peace agreement or, alternatively, having the war continue. We believed the flawed peace to be preferable. Now we in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the Council and the peoples of our country, must work together to marginalize the flaws and rebuild the country on an ever sounder foundation. Clearly, when one starts with a crack at the base, it is not always easy either to proceed or to have confidence in the long-term stability of the process.

However, I believe we all understand our responsibilities, and we have no other alternative but to go ahead.

The President: I thank the Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina for his important briefing, and for his very kind words addressed to me.

I now call on Mr. Zivko Radisic, Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Radisic (Bosnia and Herzegovina) *(spoke in Serbian; interpretation provided by the delegation):* Allow me, Mr. President, to express my sincere gratitude for your invitation to the Members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina to participate at this important meeting dedicated to the implementation and results of the Dayton Peace Accord, whose fourth anniversary we mark this month.

It is a special honour and satisfaction for me to personally address this Council as a Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where I represent the Serb people and the Republika Srpska.

I would like to extend my condolences on the tragic plane crash several days ago in which personnel of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo lost their lives.

Also allow me at the outset to express my agreement with the global assessments of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the views presented by the other Members of the Presidency.

I assure the Council that the Dayton/Paris General Framework Agreement for peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a monumentally important historic event; it established peace and equality among the nations that live in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Peace Accord and its annexes guarantee a balanced relationship between the two multi-ethnic entities, which are treated equally, the three constituent nations and the common institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Our experience so far indicates that there is no alternative to this document and that it has an excellent chance of being a permanent basis on which relations should be built in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with prosperity and stability as its goal, as well as being a factor for overall stability in the entire region.

I would therefore like to pay a special tribute to the authors of this very important document and the entire international community for their efforts to establish peace and for their assistance in the reconstruction and development of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In particular, it has contributed to the nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina turning to their future, their economic development and an affirmation of constitutional institutions and democratic practice. We note that since Dayton our mutual understanding and tolerance have been enhanced, thus reducing the hatred and fear that led us astray.

The Dayton Peace Accord has strong support in the Republika Srpska from all its citizens, political parties and State institutions. That support is an expression of the belief that the Accord paves the way to peace, economic development and the development of democracy, respect for the political will of the voters, the acceleration of economic reforms and cooperation and integration with Europe and the international community. For the nations and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Dayton Peace Accord ended a very difficult period — marked by destruction and suffering, an inter-ethnic, religious and civil war — with enormous loss of life, demographic turbulence and extreme material destruction. But it also marked the beginning of a new phase which offers realistic chances of bringing about a brighter future, peaceful and stable development, and guarantees of human and national rights, freedoms and values. That is why respect for the norms set out in the Dayton Accord and their consistent implementation encourage the nations and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, just as the destruction of those norms disappoints them and leads them into uncertainty.

In the past four-year period, important results have been achieved in the implementation of the Dayton Peace Accord. Peace and the freedom of movement of people and goods have been established throughout the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The military aspect of the Dayton Peace Accord has been implemented with enormous success, without any incidents or resistance. Common institutions have been established at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mutual tolerance and understanding are increasing at all levels of work and decision-making. Initial results have been achieved in the reconstruction and economic recovery of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Important reforms which ought to contribute to the establishment of a market economy and the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina internationally have begun.

A significant advance has been made particularly during this year, on the return of refugees and displaced persons to their dwellings. Over a 10-month period this

year, more families of minority people have returned to the Republika Srpska than in the past three years. The Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina has taken a decision on the reduction of military contingents and military spending by 15 per cent compared with last year. The demilitarization of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider region has the potential of being our final goal, since in that way we can create conditions for lasting peace and rapid economic development.

Thanks to the overall assistance and engagement of the international community, and the understanding and tolerance in institutions, we have created the conditions for the entry of Bosnia and Herzegovina into wider international structures and its willingness to become a real part of Europe and the world. The best example of this is the successful organization of the South-Eastern Europe Stability Pact Summit and Bosnia and Herzogovina's readiness and willingness to actively work on this regional integration. In addition to that, there is intensive activity to create conditions that will enable Bosnia and Herzegovina to become a member of the European Council, hopefully early next year, and the day when conditions are ripe for its membership in the World Trade Organization.

More importantly, we stress the significance of understanding that there is no alternative to peace, and that creating a climate of trust, understanding and tolerance prevents and decreases fear, hatred and ethnic and human tensions and creates the potential for global affirmation of cultural, spiritual and social values in the progress of contemporary civilization.

I am convinced that the results achieved in implementing the Dayton Peace Accord would be even greater had the norms and the spirit of Dayton been fully and consistently respected. The arbitration decision on Brcko has infringed on the premise of the territorial integrity of the entities and caused crisis and dissatisfaction among the citizens of the Republika Srpska. Economic aid pledged by the international community at the donors' conferences has up to now been uneven, and this has resulted in the slowing down of the economic recovery and development of the Republika Srpska, as well as its lagging behind in development compared to the other entity. I believe that the behaviour on the part of certain institutions of the Republika Srpska has also had an impact in that field.

As the Council is well aware, direct damage resulting from the tragic war in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been estimated at over $50 billion, and the international community has up to this time approved around $5.1 billion in various forms of aid. Financial support for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina must be continued with the goal of creating minimum conditions for establishing a self-sustaining economy as a factor for achieving economic and political stability for Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is why we expect that the Council will support our request to hold more donors' conferences, and we wish to reassure the Council that we will, on our part, create the institutional conditions and favourable environment for the entry and security of foreign investments.

Life in Bosnia and Herzegovina is still very difficult. We have not even achieved 50 per cent of our pre-war level of development, and it is well known that even then we were lagging behind Europe and the rest of the world. It is our belief that economic development and social stability must now given absolute priority in all our efforts. That is the only way we will be able to stem the mass emigration of our citizens, increase the conditions for a faster return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes and further strengthen the institutions of a State based on law, as well as successfully fight against crime, corruption and terrorism, which already pose a threat.

Our vision of Bosnia and Herzegovina assumes a stable and democratic State with accelerated progress in all aspects, equal security for all, full equality of nations and citizens and a free flow of people, goods, information and ideas. The consistent implementation of the Pact for Stability in the region will provide an additional incentive to achieve that goal. That is also an opportunity for the Dayton Peace Accords, whose preservation and consistent implementation I strongly advocate.

Contrary to the clear stipulations of the Peace Accord, the Peace Implementation Council for Bosnia and Herzegovina, at its regular sessions in Sintra, Bonn, London, Luxembourg and Madrid, frequently expanded the authority of the international community and that of the international organization. As a rule, that was done at the expense of the responsibilities of the entity bodies, as well as at the expense of the politically expressed will of the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I advocate the affirmation of the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the entities, as well as the rights and responsibilities of the parliaments of the entities and the joint institutions of Bosnia and

Herzegovina, and less imposition on the part of anybody. That does not bring into question the role and importance of the High Representative or a number of other factors in Bosnia and Herzegovina with whom cooperation is more and more likely, but involves the strengthening of the role and the responsibility of the legal and constitutional bodies in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Today's Declaration and the document to which we agreed in New York last night provide support and a challenge, not only as a declaration, but above all our decisiveness and readiness to make additional efforts in further implementation of the Dayton Peace Accord.

Our fundamental goal remains the preservation of peace and stability on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina and beyond. It is possible to guarantee prosperous development, democratization of society and integration into Europe and the world only if the Dayton Peace Accord is respected much more consistently and clearly. Every forced revision of Dayton and its unilateral interpretation will lead to the instability of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I am convinced that, in the interest of peace and stability, the values and results achieved will be kept and preserved and that new possibilities for the implementation of Dayton and the affirmation of Bosnia and Herzegovina will arise.

Bosnia and Herzegovina provides a great challenge and opportunity for all of us and for the entire world. For some, it also provides a sort of experiment in new conditions. For the nations and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is even more than that — it is the hope that there will never again be a war, displacements, fear, hatred and lagging in development. Bosnia and Herzegovina is, and must forever be, a part of a contemporary, democratic and prosperous Europe and the world.

The President: I thank the Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina for his important briefing and for his kind words addressed to me.

Before calling on the members of the Council, I wish to inform the Council that I have this very morning received the New York Declaration adopted by the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The New York Declaration will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

Mr. Holbrooke (United States of America): I thank the delegation of Slovenia for convening this historic Security Council meeting. I would especially like to thank the Foreign Minister of Slovenia and Ambassador Türk for the enormous amount of work they have done to make it possible to hold a meeting that could not have been imagined four years ago and would not have been possible even 18 months ago.

I also welcome back to New York Ambassador Lavrov, who arrived only a few hours ago from the region. We look forward to hearing his views on the situation in the Balkans based on his first-hand observations.

Before I speak to the issues we are here to discuss today, I would like to recognize the extraordinary gathering of members of the United States Congress who have joined us here today. The fact that they have come here during one of the busiest times of the year — a time during which negotiations in Washington over the budget, including the United Nations arrears, have reached their decisive, culminating point — speaks to the importance that we place on the work of the United Nations and to the issue of fulfilling the Dayton Agreements. With your permission, Sir, I would like to introduce them because I believe it will illustrate to our friends from the many nations represented here today the wide and varied responsibilities of the Congress and help some of our friends better understand the unique and important role of the Congress — which, as you all know, pays the bills.

First, it is my great honour to introduce the ranking minority member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Subcommittee on the United Nations, the Senator from California, Barbara Boxer. Secondly, it is my great honour to introduce the Chairman of the House International Relations Committee, from the State of New York, Congressman Ben Gilman. Behind Congressman Gilman is the ranking Democratic member of the Committee, from the State of Connecticut, Sam Gejdenson. Also in the group behind me, the ranking Democratic member of the Africa Subcommittee, from the State of New Jersey — in fact, specifically his district is Newark, in case you want to know who is in control of that airport you use — Congressman Donald Payne. Congressman Robert Wexler, from Florida, on the Asian and Western Hemisphere Subcommittees. From the Banking and Government Reform Committees, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, from the State of New York and the City of New York. Also form the State of New York, the Congressman in whose district LaGuardia Airport lies — well, you should know who is in charge of your districts, where the airports are — working on the Policy and Trade Subcommittee,

Congressman Joseph Crowley. Tony Hall, our Congressman from Dayton, and some other members, are no longer here. I think that covers everyone. Thank you for allowing me to introduce them to you. I hope you will get a chance to know them better.

In an era of bad news and difficult crises, today is a remarkable conjunction of several major events. Earlier today, the United States and China reached an agreement on the World Trade Organization (WTO), and I hope that the European Union and Canada will similarly move forward soon. This is a truly historic achievement and I have been in touch with our negotiators, who wanted it noted here today. Secondly, it has been announced today that there will be talks on Cyprus under the auspices of the United Nations — another hopeful and promising development. Finally, before we turn to the matter at hand, I would note that the reports in the media this morning of a breakthrough on the question of the United States payment of its arrears to the United Nations are accurate to this extent: we are within a tiny amount of a final agreement. I believe the elements are in place but that there is some clean-up to do on some issues not related to the United Nations. I am delighted that we appear to have reached a point where we will be able to begin discussing with the United Nations the Helms-Biden-Albright package that will allow us to pay our arrears.

So it seems auspicious that on the same day you, Sir, have convened this historic gathering. When I look around the room it seems scarcely believable that we could be sitting here in peace, seeing representatives of elements that were fighting each other for so many years all speaking about their support of the Dayton Agreements. Four years ago, on this very day, on 15 November 1995, we were locked in a difficult, tense negotiation at Dayton, Ohio, as the world watched. We were entering our third week. We were at a critical and difficult stalemate. Several people in this room — including President Izetbegovic, Ambassador Sacirbey, Foreign Minister Prlic, Ambassador Alkalaj, Ambassador Chris Hill, Ambassador Jim Pardew, Rosemarie Pauli and my wife, Kati Marton — were with us at Dayton at that difficult and tense time. The international community demanded that the leaders of the former Yugoslavia make tough choices. And six days later, on 21 November 1995, they did so, signing the Dayton Agreements and giving Bosnia a foundation for peace.

Significant as that was, the Agreement in Dayton only ended the war. Winning the peace still lay ahead. Events over the past four years have proved how difficult it is to overcome years of bloodshed and ethnic hatred. But what we have just heard today from Presidents Jelavic, Izetbegovic and Radisic gives us reason for some hope. Over two years ago, in August 1997, when I met with the three Presidents at Sarajevo — two of whom have been subsequently replaced — they could barely sit in the room. They argued over whether or not they would meet and where they would meet, and they barely spoke to each other. But today, two new Presidents join President Izetbegovic to show us and the world that they can work together to reach additional agreements beyond Dayton to strengthen Bosnia.

We have an important opportunity before us to push the Dayton peace process forward. The announcement this morning of the New York Declaration is another important step in that direction. The Declaration is, I hope, a clear indication by the Presidency that all three men are committed to removing the remaining obstacles to the full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. With this important act, the Presidents have taken a major step towards consolidating the progress of the past few years and in doing so have helped Bosnia take another step towards fulfilling the vision of Dayton — a unified, single, democratic country.

The commitments made this morning have important practical as well as symbolic value. By establishing the State border service, by supporting a single national passport, by creating a permanent executive staff for the joint Presidency, and by expressing a commitment to fund the State ministries fully, the Presidents have, in the New York Declaration, committed themselves to strengthening the central Government, without which Bosnia will not hold together. The Declaration also commits the Presidents to take a number of concrete measures to accelerate refugee returns, the ultimate test of a future Bosnia. And finally, the Declaration signifies that by undertaking a willingness to join international peacekeeping operations, Bosnia is giving back to the international community, rather than simply taking from it.

But great problems and concerns remain.

I was pleased that President Izetbegovic, whom no one has ever accused of being overly optimistic, said today — and I have never heard him say it before — that the glass is half full. This pleased me greatly, but I know he would agree with me that the rest of the glass must be filled and that we ought to move more rapidly.

Four years after Dayton, Bosnia remains far from where we hoped it would be. We call on the Office of the High Representative and on Ambassador Petritsch to press for full implementation. I do not believe that he has expanded his authority or that the Peace Implementation Council has expanded its authority beyond what is authorized in the Dayton Agreements. And let me state to those who have suggested that they have exceeded their authority under the Dayton Agreements that, as one of the people who worked on the Dayton Agreements, I do not accept that interpretation. The role of the international community is far from over. Indeed, by this historic meeting today, we are reaffirming it and strengthening the United Nations role in that process. We did that earlier this month when we heard from Jacques Klein, the Secretary-General's personal Representative.

Let me be specific on what needs to be done. First, the presidency must not shirk from its commitment on refugee returns. This is the test. Can people live in areas where they are an ethnic minority? The news is not yet sufficient or satisfactory. While, as President Jelavic, President Izetbegovic and President Radisic all pointed out, minority refugees have gone back in twice the numbers this year as last year, most of the returns have been to damaged and empty houses in rural areas and outlying villages.

Outside of Sarajevo, there has been insufficient return to major cities in the Federation or Republika Srpska. Our efforts on refugee returns must now shift, and we must focus on promoting returns to urban areas and all the challenges that that brings, including new property legislation. I am glad the Presidents here today recognize this problem and declared in the Declaration of New York that they would establish a joint commission, with international representation, that will report back to the Security Council by March of next year. This is an important new obligation by the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the international community.

Secondly, as President Izetbegovic said in his remarks, much more must be done to enhance transparency, promote the rule of law and fight the insidious cancer that is called corruption. Like many former communist countries in transition, Bosnia is suffering from a culture of corruption inherited from the previous system. The fact is — let us be honest — the Governments of Bosnia could do far more to fight corruption than they have in the last four years.

Thirdly and finally, there must be a stronger, sustained fight against the forces of evil and darkness that still lurk in many parts of Bosnia — the murderers, the fascists, the racists, the crooks, the thugs who seek to destroy what has been achieved for their own narrow goals. Let me be clear: fighting these forces is not easy. They are dangerous, and when confronted they will lash out against the voices of moderation and tolerance in Bosnia, as they did two weeks ago in trying to kill Zeljko Kopanja, the brave Bosnian Serb journalist in Banja Luka who nearly died from a car bomb after exposing some of these people for the gangsters and war criminals they really are. Here I would take note of the Government of Austria's rapid and generous efforts towards the rehabilitation of Mr. Kopanja, who has either been moved already or will be moved soon to a hospital in Vienna.

To be sure, political and economic reforms now under way will curtail some of the activities of the most obstructionist ultra-nationalist groups. That said, more must be done to confront ethnic parallel institutions and structures of authority. For example, we cannot tolerate separate intelligence services in the Federation, which function as illegal police forces under ultra-nationalist party control. For example, banks and other businesses illegally seized by nationalists during the war must be challenged by joint police forces and the international community. For example, radical nationalist political party obstructionists and individual politicians should be removed from the political process when they seek to destroy it. Here I refer again specifically to my public statements in Mostar two and half months ago that I believe that the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) and radical parties are in open defiance of Dayton and that the Office of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) has the authority to shut them down.

As today's Declaration here in New York makes clear, Bosnian leaders must do a better job of establishing and reinforcing the institutions of statehood. They should act so that they represent the interests of all Bosnians and not just a particular ethnic group. The goal of Dayton, and the goal we should address here today, is simple: one country, one central government, two democratic, multi-ethnic entities. The tasks ahead will require each of us, and the international community as a whole, to demonstrate unity, strength and courage as we press ahead with implementation of the Dayton Accords.

In this regard, I wish to point out that not far away in Kosovo, Mr. Kouchner and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) are struggling with far greater problems. As I have said before in private session, and I wish to repeat again

today, success in Kosovo and Bosnia are equally important to the international community, and one cannot be separated from the other in the long run. Bosnia is years ahead of Kosovo on the time-lines of history, but success in both will be required for stability in the region. The ultimate obstruction to all of this remains what it has been for the last nine years: the leadership in Belgrade.

We all know that there are those in Bosnia who will continue their efforts to stop progress and reconciliation. Even among us there are some who will say that democracy, respect for human rights and an end to ethnic hatred are not worth the effort or the cost to the international community. The people who came together in Dayton four years ago understood the price of war. We must not forget the costs they have borne and the sacrifices they have already made. It is our responsibility to be there to support them.

I thank you again, Mr. President, for convening this historic meeting.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of France wishes to welcome your presence here today, Sir, to preside over this formal meeting of the Security Council. I wish to thank you for having reflected the views of the members of the Security Council in expressing our condolences to the families of those members of the World Food Programme who gave their lives in the service of the United Nations in Kosovo. This is a sad but real reminder of the price that is paid by the international community and by the United Nations to continue to contribute to the restoration of peace and stability in the Balkans. That is why, as we speak of Bosnia and Herzegovina today, the example of Kosovo and the problems which we are confronting must remain ever present in our minds.

The presence of the co-Presidents here in the Security Council Chamber today is, as Ambassador Holbrooke just stated, historic in nature and of great symbolic value, four years after the Dayton/Paris Agreement, which put an end to the conflict in their country. That agreement created a common State in which the ethnic rivalries that ravaged Bosnia and Herzegovina could be overcome and in which the various authorities could at last work together to reconstruct a Bosnia and Herzegovina capable of resuming fully its place within the European nations. It is therefore particularly auspicious that four years after the Dayton/Paris Agreement, one of the principal architects of that Agreement is here to welcome the Members of the Presidency. He will have recognized himself in that description.

I might recall also that the three Members of the Presidency were all elected. It is good that some of the delegations welcoming them to the Security Council Chamber include parliamentary and other national representatives. Their presence here also bears witness to the importance that they attach to the work of the United Nations and in particular to the role of the Security Council. The Security Council is here to ensure respect for the values that guided the actions of Member States throughout the quest for a lasting peace. Rejection of ethnic and religious hatred, respect for others and the primacy of law were the values for which the States members of the Security Council sought to ensure respect when, over the years, they pursued the work that led to the Dayton Accord and the Paris Conference.

The progress achieved since then demonstrates that our objective of achieving peace in a united, multi-ethnic and democratic Bosnia and Herzegovina is within reach. But we all know that a great deal remains to be done. Examples of issues that must be dealt with have just been given by Ambassador Holbrooke. We all know that much remains to be accomplished before the common institutions can begin to function on a daily basis and reinforce the union of the peoples that make up the country. The collegial Presidency is at the centre of the common institutions that must guide Bosnia and Herzegovina towards that future of unity and stability. That central role confers privileges; the collegial Presidency represents Bosnia and Herzegovina in international organizations and institutions, and it is in that context that its Members are here in the Security Council today.

But those privileges go hand in hand with equally important duties. On 8 November, the High Representative, Ambassador Petritsch, reminded us of the importance of those duties, and hence of the need for the leaders and the entire population of Bosnia and Herzegovina to take charge of the future of their country. International support is necessary, but it cannot be maintained indefinitely at the current level. Increasingly, Bosnia and Herzegovina will have to rely on its own resources in order to carry out successfully the needed reforms. But the co-Presidents have the necessary political and moral authority to encourage Bosnia and Herzegovina to move in that direction.

With the assistance of the High Representative, the Presidency has undertaken commitments that have already been acknowledged by the Security Council, and it was a pleasure for us to hear them recalled by the Presidency today. They include a commitment to work unequivocally for the united State of Bosnia and Herzegovina and for the common institutions on which it is based; a commitment to increase the economic prosperity of the country, which will require the establishment of a legislative and fiscal framework to promote investment and local economic activity; a commitment to promote the development of a common educational system that respects the cultures of all the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina; and a commitment to promote the return of refugees and displaced persons. The High Representative reminded us that at the current rate, the return process will take at least 22 years in the Federation and 40 years in the Republika Srpska. The reform of the property law must be carried out in order to facilitate these returns. There is also a commitment to reduce military expenditure, which is clearly compatible with a future of peace and economic prosperity.

However, these commitments, on which the High Representative worked energetically with the Presidency, do not suffice. The establishment of a unified State means creating the instruments of its sovereignty. On 24 June last, the three Members of the Presidency recognized the need to create a border service, and the Office of the High Representative worked in the country to develop that project. We are pleased to note today that the co-Presidents have taken the opportunity offered by this historic visit to the United Nations to give concrete form to the implementation of shared institutions: the New York Declaration, which the Presidency adopted yesterday evening — following the work of one of the essential architects of the Dayton Accords, to whom, as I said earlier, I believe tribute should be paid — enshrines the establishment of those border services. In other words, it is an instrument of the sovereignty of a single State.

The Presidency has also announced the establishment of a permanent secretariat, a matter about which we exchanged some ideas with the High Representative a few days ago. It goes without saying that if the Presidency is to be an effective instrument, it must have at its disposal a high-quality, professional administrative service, and it was therefore necessary for a permanent secretariat to be established; hence the decision that was taken last night, for which we commend the Presidency. In the context of the common instruments of sovereignty, the Presidency also concluded an agreement on the establishment of a national passport. It will also be necessary to finalize the draft electoral law.

A series of concrete decisions have thus been made that reflect the will of the Presidency to overcome the difficulties with which we have become only too familiar over the years with regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina and to move genuinely towards the establishment of a common State, with viable common institutions represented not just in words but in deeds.

This meeting could have been a merely symbolic and historic gathering — which would have been completely justifiable — to mark the fourth anniversary of the conclusion of the Dayton/Paris Agreement. But you, the Members of the Presidency, wanted to do better in coming here to New York. As I have said, that reflects your commitment not only to the ideals of the Charter but also to the role of the United Nations and, in particular, that of the Security Council.

It is an important sign at a time when that role is sometimes called into question. That is why it is so important, gentlemen, that you are here in this Chamber today — along, as I said, with some of the other principal architects of the peace agreement. By coming here, you have lived up to these ideals and to the expectations of the Security Council. In this way you have taken an essential step, moving beyond mere commitments to conclude agreements that relate directly to affirming the common nature of your institutions and the unified nature and sovereignty of your State. That is the best service you can render to peace, to your country and to the United Nations.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I join other members, Sir, in expressing satisfaction at the manner in which you have been presiding over the Security Council at today's meeting. We wish also to thank you and the entire delegation of Slovenia for taking the initiative to convene this important meeting.

I also join in welcoming the members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who have come today to address the members of the Security Council.

The international community's most important task in Bosnia remains that of ensuring that the peace process is irreversible and lasting, and strengthening the multi-ethnic nature of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina by

building the foundations of democracy and respecting the rights of all the peoples of that country.

It is important that all three members of the Presidency today reaffirmed their determination together to bring about the consistent implementation of the Peace Agreement and not to permit any arbitrary changes to the Dayton text or any unjustifiable outside pressure in its implementation.

The Bosnians themselves bear the chief responsibility for pursuing the peace process and for normalizing the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The international community is helping them to the extent that it can, and it will continue to do so; but it cannot build a stable and prosperous Bosnia for the Bosnians. That is the ultimate goal of the Peace Agreement, and it requires lasting reconciliation and solidarity on the part of all the Bosnian parties. A most important factor for success is the smooth and effective functioning of the common State institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The leadership of the entities and their representatives in pan-Bosnian institutions must finally overcome their political, national and ethnic disagreements and get down to constructive work in compliance with the Peace Agreement and other international agreements on Bosnia and Herzegovina. We welcome the positive changes in this regard, including the effective joint work of the Presidency in the context of the Standing Committee for Military Matters.

To be sure, a number of difficulties remain, first and foremost with respect to ensuring the proper measure of cooperation by both entities, not only in common State institutions but also in relations with the leading international structures in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the entire United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Such cooperation, along with the independent cooperation of the Bosnian parties towards progress in the Dayton-Paris process, would be timely, as important issues remain to be resolved. These include the organization of a Bosnian police force, the establishment of a democratic court system, the campaign against corruption, the establishment of a unified border service, the adoption of an election law, and the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, along with other issues.

We are pleased that these issues were among the subjects of the Declaration that the members of the Presidency adopted yesterday in New York, a document which we shall study carefully. We trust that the obligations it sets out will be met in a consistent manner. We also note that the Declaration affirms the commitment of the members of the Presidency to the task of ensuring military cooperation between the entities, and in particular to the establishment of a joint unit for participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations. But, as we understand it, this still does not address the fact that there are three de facto independent armies in Bosnia, which is clearly not a normal situation and which does not help in the trend towards integration and towards strengthening a unified Bosnian State. We call for action on the development of a unified military doctrine for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We are concerned about the continued negative impact on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina of the final arbitration award on Brcko. It is important that that decision be implemented in a way that will stabilize the situation to the greatest possible extent and that will be in accordance with the Peace Agreement — in other words, through identifying solutions acceptable to all parties.

I had intended to end my statement here, but I cannot fail to convey my gratitude to Ambassador Holbrooke, who is no longer in the Chamber, for his words of welcome upon my return from a trip to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and in particular to Kosovo. Bearing in mind what has been said here today about the relationship between the issues being addressed respectively in Bosnia and in Kosovo, let me respond to Ambassador Holbrooke's query by saying briefly that my principal personal conclusions on Kosovo are not very encouraging. The safety and security of the population seem to be increasingly under threat; indeed, the number of incidents has increased, which cannot be accounted for solely by the activities of criminal elements. More and more often, we see that the majority of such incidents reflect an organized policy aimed at expelling non-Albanians from Kosovo: all non-Albanians, not only Kosovars. This is undermining resolution 1244 (1999).

In my personal view, which was only strengthened by my trip to Kosovo, KFOR and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) are unable to eliminate provocations and activities intended to undermine resolution 1244 (1999), or to guarantee the proper level of safety and security for all. I do not mean to say that they are not doing good work or that they are not trying hard enough; I merely note that at present the result is a lack of — indeed a deterioration in — proper

safety and security, even though some very important measures are being taken through KFOR and UNMIK.

Uncontrolled activities continue by what are called elements of the former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), who are in fact under the control of no one. Heavy artillery fire on villages continues, along with the burning of churches and other acts intended to humiliate and intimidate. It is interesting to note that a KLA flag appeared in the building that houses the headquarters of the Kosovo Protection Corps. General Klaus Reinhardt ordered that the flag be removed and replaced with a United Nations flag. This was done. But by the evening of that day, the United Nations flag had disappeared, and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) flag had reappeared. Therefore, I am convinced that, as in Bosnia, representatives and leaders of the international presence must use all of their authorized powers so as not to allow for such developments, which are already a threat to the authority of all of the powerful international structures now being erected in Kosovo.

Of course, I cannot agree with attempts to link decisions relating to Kosovo or Bosnia with any questions that have nothing to do with the issues under discussion, as this might be interpreted as interference in the internal affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

I will be prepared to give members of the Security Council my impressions in greater detail, with specific facts, at the meeting devoted to problems of Kosovo. For the moment I wished simply to respond to Ambassador Holbrooke's request for me to share my impressions.

Mr. Fowler (Canada): I would like to join others in expressing personal thanks to you, Mr. President, for so eloquently commemorating the loss of 24 people last Friday in the World Food Programme flight into Kosovo. Among them was a young Canadian named Dan Rowan, who was on his way to Pristina to offer advice on penal reform in response to an appeal that Mr. Kouchner had issued in the Security Council a few weeks ago. I know that his family will very much appreciate your words and the Council's expression of sympathy.

I would also like to thank you on behalf of Canada for organizing this important meeting with the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency, which will reinforce the Security Council's continuing engagement in the process of bringing sustainable peace to that country and to the Balkan region more generally. We hope this engagement, manifested by today's briefing and by the recent appearances of Mr. Klein and Mr. Petritsch before the Security Council, will serve to underline the international community's resolve to see the Bosnia and Herzegovina peace process fully implemented.

The international community and the Office of the High Representative will continue to support the process, but ultimately Bosnia and Herzegovina has to implement its own peace. This is the substance of the ownership strategy which the High Representative outlined to the Council last week. Canada supports this strategy and urges the Presidency to cooperate fully with Mr. Petritsch in bringing it about.

We also urge the Presidency and the Council of Ministers to work with other levels of government, including the entities, to reform national institutions in order to make them more efficient, transparent and democratic. The building of common institutions is, of course, crucial to the development of both the State and civil society.

To this end, we are pleased that the draft permanent election law has recently been presented to the Bosnia and Herzegovina institutions. We hope that it will promote a democratic and multi-ethnic political process and make elected officials more accountable to the voters. The law should be adopted as soon as possible. The Steering Board is ready to do its part to help ensure that this issue is resolved in a timely manner.

Despite progress in some areas, there are clearly elements of the peace implementation process that require more commitment and resolve from the Bosnia and Herzegovina governments. For example, Canada is concerned with the issue of resettlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as are others who have spoken. The return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes must continue to be given top priority. We acknowledge the progress made thus far. Clearly, however, further progress on this front is critical in measuring real commitment to a lasting peace within the Dayton framework.

The flawed judicial system in Bosnia remains a major obstacle to the development of a modern democratic State. A self-sustaining peace in Bosnia can be achieved only with a judiciary that is independent from political pressure. Canada urges Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities at all levels to improve cooperation with the international experts in developing plans for judicial reform.

Further, we urge the Council of Ministers and the Members of the Presidency to adopt — as they have agreed in their New York Declaration — in a timely manner, the proposed border service law, in keeping with their 24 June commitment on this issue. Without adoption of this law, Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue to haemorrhage resources that are vitally needed for the provision of key public services, including efforts to improve the financial situation of pensioners, teachers and workers.

Lastly, the long-term success of the Dayton Peace Accords depends on Bosnia and Herzegovina's ability to develop a self-sustaining economy, which creates jobs, keeps inflation in check and provides a strong basis for local and foreign investment. Authorities must help create an enabling environment in which business can thrive and prosper.

Today's discussion demonstrates the commitment of the international community to support Bosnia and Herzegovina on the path to lasting peace. We call on all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to do their part to achieve this goal.

The President: I thank the representative of Canada for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation would like to extend a very warm welcome to Mr. Ante Jelavic, Chair of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Members of the joint Presidency, Mr. Alija Izetbegovic and Mr. Zivko Radisic. Their presence here among us in the Council today is indeed a historic occasion. Their presence, as far as my delegation is concerned, symbolizes the continuing commitment of the leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina to work together to bring to a close a dark chapter of the country's history and to bring the country back to its rightful place in the family of sovereign States.

My delegation also joins others in mourning the tragic deaths of personnel of the World Food Programme in Kosovo.

My delegation wishes to thank the Chair and the Members of the Presidency of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina for their briefings on the current situation in their country, which we find extremely useful. We are gratified that there has indeed been some progress in the peace implementation process in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, further strenuous and sustained efforts are required before Bosnia and Herzegovina will enjoy self-sustaining peace and stability and emerge from the protective care of the international community.

A number of fundamental common State institutions have been constituted and begun to function, albeit with a number of constraints. We believe that with the necessary political will, these impediments can be overcome. The statements just made by the Members of the Presidency attest to their commitment and genuine desire to overcome them and to continue to work together towards realizing a shared vision of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an independent, unified, multi-ethnic, multicultural and multireligious State within its internationally recognized borders.

Much remains to be done to resolve the remaining critical problems and to ensure that peace and stability will be further consolidated and will endure in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The return of refugees and displaced persons, in particular the return of people to areas in which they are in a minority, reconciliation among different ethnic communities, minority protection and economic reforms and recovery are among the main outstanding problems that have to be urgently and comprehensively addressed to facilitate the establishment of a viable statehood for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The international community has made the return of refugees to all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina one of the highest priorities. This is imperative for reconciliation in the country. Like others, we are concerned by the very slow pace of the return process. Last week the High Representative informed this Council that if the current slow tempo of return continued the process would take at least 22 years to be completed in the Federation, and 40 years in the Republika Srpska. Clearly, new approaches need to be taken to address this issue, with, of course, the full cooperation of the leadership and people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, so as to bring about more tangible results.

There are a number of other challenges that still have to be overcome. They include the continuing entrenched positions of certain groups and parties and the deep ethnic divisions that still exist. The situation demands greater efforts on the part of the leadership and principal forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina to achieve increased democracy, tolerance and reconciliation among the different ethnic communities. My delegation believes that the assertion of the political and moral authority of the Presidency will contribute significantly to developing a positive environment. In this regard, my delegation

warmly welcomes the New York Declaration issued by the joint Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Malaysia's own experience as a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious country has convinced us that tolerance is the indispensable ingredient for co-existence and nation-building. Malaysia is proud to have been associated with the efforts to rebuild peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition to our programme of bilateral cooperation, until last year Malaysia participated in the United Nations Protection Force, the Implementation Force and the Stabilization Force (SFOR), and our civilian police personnel continue to serve with the International Police Task Force (IPTF).

As part of our contribution to the national reconciliation efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina — with encouragement from the Bonn Peace Implementation Conference and funding by Canada — Malaysia organized a non-governmental forum in Kuala Lumpur in August last year. The objective was to expose the participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Malaysia's own experience as a multi-ethnic, multi-religious nation. We found the forum extremely useful in providing fresh perspectives and approaches to promoting trust, confidence and tolerance in a plural society. While the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is vastly different from that in Malaysia, we believe that there may be lessons to be learned from the Malaysian experience in multi-ethnic living.

We commend the ongoing work of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and of the IPTF, in particular the Mission's efforts aimed at establishing a viable political force and judicial system in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We also commend the High Representative's recent measures relating to the package of property legislation reforms and the introduction of a new draft election law, as well as the ongoing work on the establishment of a State border service. We are gratified that these important new measures have the full support of the Presidency, Government and people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as they constitute essential elements for national reconciliation, democracy and security.

The success of international involvement in Bosnia and Herzegovina can only be guaranteed if there is a strong commitment of and full cooperation from the Bosnian leadership and the people at every level. Ultimately the main responsibility for achieving reconciliation and lasting peace in the country lies with the leaders and people of Bosnia and Herzegovina themselves. At the same time, a durable peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina requires the full cooperation of its neighbours.

My delegation underscores once again the important role of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, and emphasizes the necessity of continuing support from the international community for the Tribunal. We believe more serious efforts should be taken to bring the indicted war criminals to justice. The continued freedom enjoyed by the leading indicted war criminals sends the wrong political message and contributes to the climate of insecurity that limits refugee returns, particularly in minority areas. The arrest and prosecution of these indicted war criminals would not only serve to mete out justice, but would also contribute to accomplishing the long-term goal of national reconciliation, which alone can guarantee Bosnia and Herzegovina freedom from the ghosts of its tragic past.

We urge all concerned in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Office of the High Representative and SFOR, to work more closely with the Tribunal in the fulfilment of its mandate. My delegation welcomes the clearly stated position of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina on this important issue.

Finally, I would like to express my delegation's deep appreciation to you, Sir, and to your delegation for making possible the convening of this truly unique and historic meeting of the Council.

The President: I thank the representative of Malaysia for his kind words addressed to me and my delegation.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to take this opportunity to convey the very best wishes of my Government to you, Sir, and to commend you on the excellent work your delegation is doing as President of the Security Council under the leadership of Ambassador Danilo Türk and his staff.

Like the preceding speakers, we pay tribute to the United Nations staff members who died in the plane accident in Kosovo last Friday.

We would like to thank the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina for being here today and for the information its members have given us this morning. It is of extreme importance that four years after Dayton we are able to welcome in the Security Council, in a historic meeting, the three members of the Presidency of Bosnia

and Herzegovina. This shows that the implementation of Dayton is moving forward in spite of the difficulties and that there has been no decline in the Council's interest in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Also of the utmost importance, in our view, are the visits to Slovenia and Germany, since they demonstrate that the joint nature of the Presidency has begun to function in practice. We encourage the leaders to continue along this unified path. In this respect, we value the New York Declaration, adopted last night, as a document that strengthens that trend and that is consistent with the concerns of the Security Council.

Argentina takes pride in the recent presentation of the credentials of the Argentine Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the possibility that it will soon be reciprocated, to the benefit of the large and prosperous community of people from Bosnia and Herzegovina now in Argentina and to bilateral relations between the two countries.

In another context, we hope that the draft law on State border services will be sent to the parliamentary Assembly as soon as possible. It is essential that a sovereign State have a service of this nature, in order to prevent smuggling and illegal immigration. It is a vital institution, whose implementation must not be further delayed because of problems of competence. The New York Declaration reflects important progress in this direction.

Another problem is the situation of approximately 800,000 internally displaced persons and the thousands of refugees outside the country who have not yet been able to return to their places of origin. This situation must be reversed. We therefore believe that the recent legislation on property, promulgated by the High Representative, Mr. Wolfgang Petritsch, must be given the greatest political support, since it meets the needs of the majority of those people who are in that situation. On the same subject, the New York Declaration also proposes measures that we support.

We encourage the Presidency to adopt the economic and legal measures necessary to create a stable and secure environment conducive to foreign investment and an open economy. We agree that Bosnia and Herzegovina has a role to play in the region and in Europe.

We urge the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina to embark on the path it outlined in its statements today and in the Declaration of New York. Aware of its responsibilities for the maintenance of peace, Argentina will continue to participate in the Stabilization Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In conclusion, the attendance here of legislators from the United States Congress, whom we respectfully welcome, reminds us of the importance of the Security Council's and the United Nations holding open meetings like today's. These make it possible for people to see the useful and effective way in which we fulfil our mandates.

The President: I thank the representative of Argentina for his kind words addressed to me.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): I congratulate you, Sir, on initiating this event today and on bringing it to fulfilment. It is very good to see this subject coming under your presidency on this day.

I think that Members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina can understand that, for a diplomat who has been associated with their country over the last eight years, it is a particular pleasure for me to see the three Members of the joint Presidency here in the Security Council, united on their business and taking steps together to bring the Dayton Accords into a further round of fruition. I congratulate them on their presence here today. The United Kingdom welcomes their strong commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign and united State and to the enhanced implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

We were very pleased to see the recent effort of the joint Presidency to promote the interests of Bosnia and Herzegovina together overseas, including in their recent visits to Slovenia and Germany. That was a good example of what the joint Presidency should be doing.

We are nevertheless still disturbed, as is the High Representative, that the common institutions as a whole are performing poorly and that there is still a long way to go before Bosnia and Herzegovina is able to function effectively as a modern European State. I think here, as President Izetbegovic has recognized, outside assistance is still necessary. First and foremost in that must be the High Representative and his Office. His presence there and his proactive work are essential to the success of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a modern and united State. Here, I think I must take slight issue with President Radisic, in that the High Representative must be given support in what he is doing. He must be able to take the decisions that are necessary day by day, because he is

doing it for the sake of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is not for nothing that people continue to work and, indeed, to die for international interests in the Balkans. In this context, I pay tribute to the victims of the recent air crash.

The United Kingdom particularly welcomes the New York Declaration reaffirming the Presidency's active support for the implementation of Dayton. Again, I would like to pay tribute to the input of the High Representative in bringing this about, and also to the role of the United States and Ambassador Holbrooke personally, who has continued to work with huge energy to make sure that Dayton is not just an event in history, but actually leads to a success for Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was a particular pleasure to see members of the United States Congress with us this morning.

I would like to welcome the joint Presidency's agreement to the establishment of a state border service on the basis of the High Representative's proposals. We have waited a long time for this and it is an essential part of bringing Bosnia and Herzegovina together. We also welcome the agreement to the establishment of a Presidency secretariat and of a joint commission on returns, which will report to the Security Council, as well as the agreement to the principle of a single national passport for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

But the United Kingdom is particularly interested in the role of the joint Presidency in looking forward to what needs to be done next. I would like to hear the Members of the Presidency state what their next priorities will be in the series of accumulated steps for the permanent stability and regeneration of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In that context, I particularly welcome the inclusion in the Declaration of their commitment to action against corruption. This was an issue that the United Kingdom Government raised in July 1997, as President Izetbegovic will remember, and that still needs action if the work of Dayton and its implementation is not to be vitiated by those who are working against the State. I hope the Presidency will be sincere in taking forward that particular commitment.

Beyond these individual issues, I hope that the Members of the joint Presidency understand their important moral and political role in leading Bosnia and Herzegovina beyond the narrow issues of ethnic politics. I entirely agree in this respect with the list of priorities which President Izetbegovic gave us earlier this morning, including refugee returns, the arrest of indictees, economic regeneration, dealing with corruption and reducing the amount of money spent on military matters. This is an important programme and I think the time has come for a much more wide-ranging commitment to reconciliation from the common institutions of the country.

In our view, the joint Presidency's visits to refugee return areas were a good start in that. The Presidency's presence here today marks another important milestone. I hope that the practice begun today of dialogue between the joint Presidency and the Security Council will continue and will mark a progressive accumulation of successes for Bosnia and Herzegovina as a modern, united State.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, we convey our condolences to the families of the victims of the air crash that took place on Friday.

The Chinese delegation would like to thank the Slovenian delegation for having convened this important meeting today. Ambassador Türk has made tremendous efforts to that end. We also wish particularly to thank the Foreign Minister of Slovenia for presiding over this meeting.

We thank Ambassador Holbrooke for introducing to us a number of important representatives of the United States Congress, whom we welcome to our meeting today.

The Chinese delegation thanks the tripartite Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina for its briefing of the Council. Its visit and the adoption of the New York Declaration offer vivid evidence of the Presidency's resolve to implement the Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina. We support the New York Declaration and appreciate the efforts made by the three parties in this regard.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is an object-lesson of United Nations participation in post-conflict peace-building. A careful summary of the lessons and experiences gained in Bosnia and Herzegovina could be helpful to ongoing United Nations operations in other regions.

China is pleased that on the whole the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been stable and that the Peace Agreement is being implemented. We have also

noted that mutual tolerance among ethnic groups and the concept of integrity are on the rise. Although progress in the implementation of the Peace Agreement has been slow, it is going in the right direction, and it should be assisted in that direction. We also agree with the saying that a flawed peace is often better than war.

The return of refugees is an important factor in guaranteeing the multi-ethnic character of Bosnian society. The international community has already made tremendous efforts in this regard, but the task continues to be arduous. It is necessary to take greater strides in creating employment opportunities and carrying out economic reform. We hope that further progress will be made in this regard.

The realization of ethnic reconciliation among Muslims, Croats and Serbs, the restoration of mutual trust and the pursuit of common development constitute the fundamental guarantees for the harmonious coexistence of the Bosnian people and for the country's long-term tranquillity and order. We sincerely hope that the leaders of the three parties will proceed on the basis of the fundamental interests of their people, put aside their differences and make common efforts to maintain the hard-won peace.

I would particularly like to emphasize that it is necessary to establish a unified armed force. The help of the international community has gradually reached all areas of Bosnian society and its peoples' lives. I wish to reiterate that the international community's participation in Bosnia's reconstruction should focus on helping the local people be self-reliant and gradually reduce their dependence on outside assistance. The comprehensive settlement of the Bosnian question ultimately depends on the Bosnian people themselves.

The Chinese delegation supports the work of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, which we hope will proceed in a professional, impartial and objective manner, so that its work will help promote the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Not long ago Mr. Petritsch, the High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina, also briefed the Council, especially on reforming property law and proposing draft electoral laws. He also proposed the concept of ownership. We have noted that the Presidency is supportive of these ideas. We believe this will help Bosnia and Herzegovina participate in international affairs as an integral whole. We hope that the Presidency will further implement these concepts and add specific content so that they can be really implemented.

The President: I thank the representative of China for his kind words addressed to my delegation and to me personally.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): I wish to associate my delegation with the deeply felt sentiment of sympathy and condolences that you, Mr. President, have expressed to the families of the United Nations personnel lost in the tragic accident that occurred in Kosovo.

I wish to thank the Members of the Bosnian Presidency for their presence here today and for the statements we have heard in this historic meeting of the Security Council. Let me also join other delegations in expressing our appreciation to the delegation of Slovenia for convening this meeting. We welcome your presence today, Mr. President, which shows not only the engagement of Slovenia on this issue, but also the permanent dedication of Slovenian diplomacy to the cause of peace and stability in the international order.

It is indeed very useful for the United Nations membership to engage in a debate that clearly shows that this Organization continues to be interested in the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In recent weeks the Council has heard briefings on Bosnia by the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and the High Representative. They have all indicated that the situation in Bosnia is still very difficult.

Despite all obstacles, the Council has insisted that everything must be done not to allow the progress already achieved to be reversed. It is important to note that much of what has already been achieved in Bosnia counted on the indispensable support of the Presidency. I will not refer to specific achievements. Suffice it to stress that the present status of Bosnia as a sovereign State relies very much on the Presidency — as the representation of Bosnia's diversity — to consolidate self-sustaining stability.

The Presidency's commitment to the Dayton/Paris Peace Accords and to the functioning of State institutions should also be commended. When the international community looks for indigenous moral and political authority in Bosnia to build a truly democratic and multicultural society, it is to the Presidency that it turns. This brings to the Presidency not only a special place in

the history of its country, but also an enormous responsibility.

The Secretary-General reported weeks ago an improvement in the level of understanding among Bosnian leaders, and the mere presence of the Members of the Presidency here is in itself progress that deserves to be registered.

But still much remains to be done. This open format helps confirm that the United Nations is concerned with the implementation of the Peace Agreements. Here I wish to put on record a word of recognition for the work of Ambassador Holbrooke with regard to Bosnia. His dedication and personal efforts in helping build a viable future for Bosnia are beginning to bear fruits.

Brazil hopes that United Nations efforts in Bosnia will be matched by a demonstration of political will by the leadership of all ethnic communities in Bosnia. It is thus essential that the people of Bosnia, inspired by their leaders, do their part in speeding up the transformation of the country.

It is important that we do not overlook the words of the High Representative concerning the existence of a culture of dependency in Bosnia. In this regard, we recognize the importance of the concept of ownership, and we hope that it will be fully incorporated by the Bosnian leaders.

The international community is very much involved in Bosnia, but it cannot bear the responsibility for all the country's affairs. We are sure that the Bosnian leaders and the people of Bosnia will put the collective interest first, displaying behaviour and responsibility compatible with their ambitions of building a State out of a divided country. In this respect, the adoption of the New York Declaration can be seen as yet another milestone on the road towards consolidation of a truly single State with common institutions. The creation of a State border service will definitely help consolidate the notion of statehood.

Economic recovery is another foundation of the road that will lead Bosnia progressively closer to an irreversible and self-sustaining peace. Stability is essential to creating an environment conducive to private investment.

In conclusion, I would echo the prevailing feeling that this debate bears a message of perseverance and determination. We share in the appeals made today for the leaders to redouble their efforts in order to create a viable society based on multi-ethnicity and diversity. It is our conviction that only by the continued and unshaken commitment to the cause of tolerance will the ideals of a prosperous and peaceful Bosnia prevail.

The President: I thank the representative of Brazil for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain)(*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this Security Council meeting, as part of the remarkable efforts being made presently by your delegation.

My delegation would also like to welcome the personal presence of the Members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Security Council. Indeed, this is a golden opportunity for Council members, an opportunity we could not even have dreamed of in the past. Their presence here today is a clear indication of the progress made in the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is also indicative of the recognition of the efforts of the Security Council in particular, and of the United Nations in general, as the Members of the Presidency have just expressed, in facing a complicated situation in a war-torn country attempting repeatedly to obtain peace. Through difficult negotiations, the signing of the Dayton Agreement was finally achieved in 1995.

The United Nations efforts did have a cost — a very high cost, at times — such as the loss of life. We express our sincere condolences to the families of World Food Programme personnel who met their death in the recent airplane accident over Kosovo.

Since the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, concrete progress has been made in the area of refugee return, in institution-building, judicial reform, economic regeneration and in other areas. However, more progress must be made for life to be normal again. This requires cooperation and concerted efforts on the part of all, the closing of the dark past, the opening of a new page — a new era — of understanding and a true desire to live in peace in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society. This is what the Security Council expects from the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

For international support to continue for peace efforts in Bosnia, the Bosnians themselves must redouble their efforts to settle their own differences. We urge the Bosnian Presidency to cooperate fully with the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the

Office of the High Representative to implement the Peace Accords in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to coordinate efforts in order to overcome the current difficulties.

As for refugee return, my delegation believes that much has to be done to ensure the full return of refugees of all ethnic backgrounds to their homes. This requires the protection of returnees, the provision of a secure environment and opportunities for work. We believe that progress achieved in the area of property law will help in this regard.

As for the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, for prosecution of war criminals, the issue was raised today by the Bosnian Presidency. It is an issue that we have raised, too, in this Council on a number of occasions, including just last week during the statement made by Ms. Carla Del Ponte, the Prosecutor of the Tribunal. The principal indictees remain at large. They perpetrated their crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, then they moved on to Kosovo. Where is justice to be found here? We are fully in favour of just forgiveness that would lead to stability in Bosnia. However, the magnitude and barbarity of those crimes require that the perpetrators be prosecuted.

We reaffirm the need to support the Tribunal and to assist it in arresting the perpetrators of crimes against humanity in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They must be prosecuted, especially the big fish among them. My delegation agrees with the Chair of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding local criminal courts. We also believe that these local courts do not have the capacity to undertake such a difficult task. In addition, we believe that these tasks fall within the jurisdiction of the International Tribunal.

The border police, economic reform, the fight against corruption, the settlement of the problem of mines — all these are issues that require further efforts. The international community can help the Bosnians to resolve these problems.

On the other hand, the Dayton Peace Agreement is the only alternative, that is, the best means currently available to resolve the problems of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, we call on all parties concerned in Bosnia and Herzegovina to hold fast to that Agreement. We call upon them to make all possible efforts to ensure that all the provisions of the Agreement are implemented in all sincerity and in good faith.

This meeting today is indicative of a collective will to overcome the current problems in order to ensure full implementation of the Dayton Agreement, followed by concrete steps that would enable Bosnia and Herzegovina to regain its material and moral force to live in peace — a peace necessary for economic and social development in the country.

Finally, we welcome the New York Declaration agreed upon by the Bosnian Presidency last night.

The President: I thank the representative of Bahrain for his kind words addressed to our delegation.

Mr. van Walsum (Netherlands): Mr. President, We join other delegations in thanking you and your delegation for having taken the initiative to convene this important meeting.

The Netherlands delegation welcomes the Joint Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is encouraging to see that despite the many difficulties that still exist among the entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Presidency has come to the Council today as one.

We also welcome the New York Declaration, which Members of the Joint Presidency have issued on the occasion of their appearance before the Security Council. We interpret their joint presence in this Chamber as a testimony to their commitment to the enhancement of the functioning of the common institutions. Only with properly functioning common institutions will Bosnia and Herzegovina be able to deal with the tasks that lie ahead.

The Netherlands regards the return of minority refugees to their places of residence as the core of the Dayton Agreements. The spontaneous return of minority refugees, which is just now gaining momentum, is a sign of hope and should not only be welcomed but also be financially supported. In this regard, we welcome the efforts of the High Representative to persuade the European Commission and other donors to continue providing flexible funds for this purpose.

However, if the Bosnian authorities at the national, cantonal and local level do not provide the facilities to make the return process possible, our common goal will not be attained. This involves creating a minimum of goodwill and tolerance by implementing confidence-building measures, such as receiving delegations of potential returnees, but it also concerns the creation of

legal conditions and the provision of financial means to solve practical matters.

Improvement on this score is needed, as was illustrated by the fact that the new property law was adopted only after instructions had been issued by the High Representative. Another example is inadequate budgeting for return projects while institutions that could generate revenue — for example, a State border service — are slow in getting off the ground. In this connection, we have noted and welcomed the reference to the State border service in the New York Declaration.

Delays in taking the necessary measures also occur in the field of privatization, almost always as a result of political quarrels among the communities. One example is the case of the Privatization Bureau in Mostar, which refuses to review privatization decisions taken hastily during the war, for fear that irregularities might come to light. Because of this attitude, the World Bank's adjustment loan for the private sector destined for the Federation narrowly escaped being blocked.

The Bosnian leadership must not resign itself to these shortcomings. We expect it to muster all its courage and to set an example for all the subsidiary levels of government in the State by embarking on genuine cooperation for the benefit of all the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The President: I thank the representative of the Netherlands for the kind words he addressed to my delegation.

Mr. Jagne (Gambia): Mr. President, our meeting today takes on particular importance for several reasons, and it does not require a major leap of the imagination to understand why. First, we are honoured to see you, Sir, preside over our deliberations, and my delegation would like to express its most profound gratitude to your delegation for all the contributions it continues to make in the quest for a lasting solution to the complex problem of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The convening of this meeting provides clear testimony to those efforts.

Secondly, we are greatly honoured by the gracious presence of the three members of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Joint Presidency, and therefore my delegation would like to join previous speakers in extending a warm welcome to them and to thank them for finding time to attend this meeting.

Thirdly, holding this meeting today — the eve of the fourth anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accords — could not be more timely.

Last but not least, the delegation of the Gambia also acknowledges the presence of an impressive gathering of United States Congresswomen and Congressmen. The United Nations as a whole needs such interaction with the United States Congress. It is a mutually beneficial relationship, and we invite them to come again and to attend more United Nations meetings. We thank Ambassador Holbrooke for taking this laudable initiative.

Having heard from all the Members of the Joint Presidency, we can say without any fear of contradiction that we are all on the same wavelength. In other words, there is no alternative to Dayton. Dayton shows the way forward towards the ultimate goal of a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We note with great satisfaction that the Joint Presidency reaffirmed its commitment to the Dayton Accords. The adoption of the New York Declaration is ample demonstration of this commitment.

We are nonetheless mindful of the fact that whilst efforts are being made for the smooth implementation of the Dayton Accords, the anti-Dayton forces are also active. These forces of evil and darkness, as Ambassador Holbrooke calls them, must be challenged and neutralized. This is why it is important also to cooperate sincerely with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia to bring to justice those indictees who are still at large. Unless and until they are pursued and brought to justice, there can be no lasting peace. The process of healing is incomplete without justice being done. This will also guarantee the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Europe, among other things. In this connection, we welcome the establishment of a State border service as part of the strategy in the fight against corruption. Thus, the importance of the State border service cannot be over-emphasized.

Similarly, the intention of the Joint Presidency to create a permanent secretariat is also a step in the right direction. Equally worthy of notice is the Joint Presidency's reaffirmation of support for the adoption of the permanent election law.

With the reduction of military spending by 15 per cent, as agreed by all the parties, we hope that the resulting savings will be spent in more productive areas, such as making proper arrangements for the return of

refugees. This is one area where we need to redouble efforts. But again, in the final analysis, a lot depends on the attitude of the leadership as a whole. The concept of ownership comes into play yet again. The rest of the international community can only assist. The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and their leaders have the final say on how to shape their common destiny.

The Joint Presidency understands that the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina is in Europe. But what does it take for Bosnia and Herzegovina to play its rightful role in Europe and, indeed, in the comity of nations? In our view, there is only one answer: giving a sense of purpose to their common institutions, as emphasized by Ambassador Greenstock. There is no other way.

Finally, we join those who spoke before us in mourning the victims of the recent air disaster in Kosovo, and we extend our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

The President: I thank the representative of Gambia for the kind words he addressed to my delegation.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): Mr. Minister, we welcome you to our midst and wish to commend you and Ambassador Türk for taking the initiative to convene this very important meeting.

Like those who spoke before, we pay tribute to the victims of the air crash in Kosovo and express our heartfelt condolences to their families.

We would also like to welcome and thank their Excellencies for their invaluable and informative briefing on the current status of the implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this regard, may I quote the report of the High Representative

> "that the work of the Presidency has constructive elements and the rotation of the function is working smoothly ... and the Presidency quickly reached agreement on a number of important areas, including reorganization of the Diplomatic and Consular services ... appointment of new Ambassadors, a commitment to establishing the State border service, and a reduction of a military budget". (*S/1999/1115, annex, para. 16*)

These are indeed positive elements in the sphere of institution-building, and we therefore encourage the Presidency to persevere in the great task of rebuilding their nation.

We note also the improvement in the rate of return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their original homes. In this context, my delegation hopes that their Excellencies will encourage Parliament to consider favourably and expeditiously the draft electoral law and private property legislation due in Parliament in order to speed up the return of the internally displaced persons to their homes.

Overall, my delegation notes with appreciation the progress that has been achieved thus far with respect to the implementation of the Peace Agreement, especially the ongoing efforts to establish common institutions. Furthermore, my delegation warmly welcomes the New York Declaration by the Joint Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Finally, it remains essential for the international community to continue providing the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the necessary resources and logistical assistance needed to build the basic foundation for a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and peaceful country.

The President: I thank the representative of Namibia for his kind words addressed to my delegation and to me personally.

Mr. Dangue Réwaka (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Allow us first, Mr. President, to associate ourselves with your tribute to the United Nations staff members who perished in last week's plane crash in Kosovo and to extend our condolences to their families.

The delegation of Gabon would like to thank you, Sir, for extending an invitation to the three Members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which enabled them to report to the Security Council today on the progress achieved in the implementation of the Dayton Agreements and on the action still to be taken. Their presence here in the Council shows their determination to put an end to the problems underlying the difficulties faced by the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We encourage them to redouble their efforts so that the pending issues may be dealt with rapidly, thereby consolidating peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Declaration they have just adopted during their stay in New York is an important step, and we congratulate them on it. We urge the international community to continue to help them actively in their reconstruction efforts to bring

about a new, united, strong and prosperous Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The President: I thank the representative of Gabon for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Foreign Minister of Slovenia.

I would like to express our satisfaction and appreciation to the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their presence and interaction with the Security Council today has a great political value and is deeply symbolic in its historical message. It demonstrates the vitality of the spirit of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an independent, sovereign and multi-ethnic State, a value of paramount importance for the future of their country.

Four years have passed since the conclusion of the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement. It needs to be stressed today, in the presence of the Members of the Presidency and in the presence of Ambassador Richard Holbrooke — the main architect of the Agreement — that ending the war is the main condition for the construction of peace. Ending the war is the beginning of peace, while the construction of peace requires additional efforts. Today Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the middle of those efforts. The Presidency has the essential role in that process, which requires fostering internal stability, political normalization and economic prosperity. The Members of the Presidency have contributed much to the implementation of this role.

Today these general requirements are easily translatable into more specific priority tasks. The return of refugees, including in particular minority returns, constitutes the first priority. The others include the establishment of a State border service, the creation of conditions for foreign investment, the creation of new jobs and the strengthening of the judiciary. We are heartened that the commitment of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina to these objectives has been renewed today.

The New York Declaration, adopted by the Members of the Presidency on the eve of the present meeting of the Security Council, is a landmark document. It demonstrates the reinforced will of the Presidency to proceed more speedily towards the realization of the accepted priority objectives.

Recently, the crisis in Kosovo severely tested peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We commend all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina for their responsible and wise attitude, which contributed to the preservation of stability in their country. The peace, stability and unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina are of critical importance for the resolution of other problems in the region, most notably the problem of Kosovo. Therefore, every effort must be made to strengthen Bosnia and Herzegovina and its institutions.

Implementing the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement will be the best guarantee of prosperity for future generations and the best way to prevent the extremist forces from spreading destructive nationalism all over again. Slovenia therefore calls upon the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and upon its common institutions, to remain sincerely committed to the principles spelled out in the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement.

Bosnia and Herzegovina must not be left alone in these efforts. The international presence and assistance is still required, and Slovenia will do its utmost to contribute its share. We stood by Bosnia and Herzegovina in its hard times, and we wish to do the same in its brighter future.

Let me conclude with an observation from last year's meeting of the Peace Implementation Council, namely, that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a European country. For Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina has always been a European country, and we support it as such. We also support its efforts to join the Council of Europe and other European institutions.

But Bosnia and Herzegovina is also a proud member of the United Nations. This meeting today is a testimony to the determination of the international community to support the independence, sovereignty, multi-ethnic character and stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ante Jelavic, Chair of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to respond to the comments and questions.

Mr. Jelavic (Bosnia and Herzegovina) (*spoke in Croatian; interpretation furnished by the delegation*): I would like to express my gratitude at being invited to this meeting, at which we have had the opportunity to reaffirm our obligation and commitment to the building of a multi-ethnic and democratic community in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Members of the Council have told us in their statements that we will have the Council's support in the future, as well as the support of other organizations of the international community. We fully support the initiative of the United Kingdom's Ambassador for full and continuous cooperation between the Security Council, the United Nations in general and the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

By adopting the New York Declaration, we the Members of the Presidency have committed ourselves to certain obligations and duties. We see this as another success in the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

I would once again like to express my gratitude to you, Mr. President, and the Council for your invitation and for the interest you have shown in our problems and in our reality today and in the future.

The President: I thank Mr. Jelavic for the clarifications he has provided.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alija Izetbegovic, Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to respond to the comments and questions.

Mr. Izetbegovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina): I would like to express to you, Mr. President, my sincere appreciation for giving me the opportunity to address the Security Council today. I have listened very carefully to the statements of the States members of the Security Council. They all expressed their support for our country, and I thank all of them. I would like to reiterate my full support for the New York Declaration and will do everything possible to ensure its implementation.

The President: I thank Mr. Izetbegovic for the clarifications he has provided and for the kind words he addressed to my delegation.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Zivko Radisic, Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to respond to the comments and questions.

Mr. Radisic (Bosnia and Herzegovina) *(spoke in Serbian; interpretation provided by the delegation):* If we compare the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina today with the one that prevailed four years ago, we can see that a lot has been done. But with respect to what we want, what the Dayton Peace Agreement realistically offers us and what we can do to shape the destiny of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we are now at the beginning of a great endeavour with lofty but realistic goals. We are deeply aware of the challenges and difficulties facing not only the Members of the Presidency but also all of the other structures in Bosnia and Herzegovina, at all levels.

Your support means a lot to us, and I am convinced that the first report prepared by the joint commission of the entities and international representatives, as provided for in the New York Declaration, will show clearly the progress that has been made in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The President: I thank His Excellency Mr. Radisic for the clarifications he has provided.

There are no further speakers left on my list.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.